



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

September 22, 2010

Ms. Andrea Slater Gulley
Underwood Law Firm
For Amarillo Independent School District
P.O. Box 9158
Amarillo, Texas 79105-9158

OR2010-14342

Dear Ms. Gulley:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 399213.

The Amarillo Independent School District (the "district"), which you represent, received a request for information related to current full-time district employees, including whether each employee makes contributions to a 403(b) retirement plan. You state that most of the requested information has been released, but the district claims that the information pertaining to 403(b) contributions is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This exception encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information if it (1) contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) is not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685

¹We assume that the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. See Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

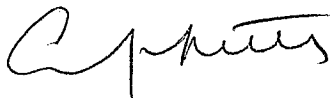
(Tex. 1976). To demonstrate the applicability of common-law privacy, both prongs of this test must be established. *See id.* at 681-82.

The types of information considered intimate or embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation* included information relating to sexual assault, pregnancy, mental or physical abuse in the workplace, illegitimate children, psychiatric treatment of mental disorders, attempted suicide, and injuries to sexual organs. *Id.* at 683. This office has found that personal financial information not relating to a financial transaction between an individual and a governmental body is generally protected by common-law privacy. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 600 (1992), 545 (1990), 373 (1983). For example, a public employee's allocation of his salary to a voluntary investment program or to optional insurance coverage which is offered by his employer is a personal investment decision and information about it is excepted from disclosure under the common law right of privacy. *See* Open Records Decision No. 545 (1990). Likewise, an employee's designation of a retirement beneficiary is excepted from disclosure under the common law right to privacy. *See* Open Records Decision No. 600 (1992). However, information revealing that an employee participates in a group insurance plan funded partly or wholly by the governmental body is not excepted from disclosure. *See* Open Records Decision No. 600 at 10 (1992). You indicate that the 403(b) plan offered by the district is totally funded by the employees with no public funds contributed by the district. You state that enrollment in the district's 403(b) plan is voluntary. Accordingly, we agree that the information at issue must be withheld under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php, or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Cindy Nettles
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CN/dls

Ref: ID# 399213

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)